

Scouting Postal Usages of the 1930s

During the 1930s, Scouting expanded across the globe with international membership exploding from 2,100,000 to 4,500,000. The number of countries with Scout or Guide organizations doubled from 18 to 36. Reflecting this world wide growth of the Scout movement, government postal officials authorized a vastly increasing number and variety of postal emissions and commemorative cancellations.

Presented chronologically, this exhibit presents the Scouting philatelic growth that mirrored the increase in world wide Scouting. Prior to 1930, only one stamp had been issued that depicted a Scout and only a handful of cancellations had been employed. In the 1930s, we might have expected the British Empire to dominate Scouting Philately as Robert Baden-Powell began the movement in England. Instead, it was the stamp issues of Eastern Europe and the commemorative cancels of Scandinavia that were most prevalent in the early 1930s. Romania was first to issue stamps honoring its national jamborees. The biannual Australian national jamborees were each memorialized with special registration labels and cancellations. North America came on strong by the mid 1930s firmly establishing the genre of envelope cachets produced by a wide range of processes. By the end of the decade, the number of countries authorizing Scout related stamps reached twelve.

Two events were most responsible for focusing world attention on Scouting in the 1930s. They were the Boy Scout World Jamborees of 1933 in Gödöllő, Hungary and 1937 in Vogelenzang, Netherlands. With their purpose of bringing Scouts from around the world together, their message of brotherhood and friendship was carried home by the attendees. Each host country honored and advertised its Jamboree with a set of commemorative stamps. These sites became instant tent cities with their own post offices complete with the Scout stamps, registration labels and canceling devices. These Jamborees inspired the youth of the world and the world stamp issuing organizations, setting the standard for an ever increasing growth in the movement and in its philately.

Exhibit Plan

1930 to Summer 1933	Frame 1
Fourth World Jamboree, 1933	Frame 2
Summer 1933 through 1937	Frames 3, 4 & 5
Fifth World Jamboree, 1937	Frame 6
1938 through 1939	Frame 7

Selections have been made for this exhibit to show the wide variety of Scout philatelic elements (stamps, postal cards, cancellations, meters, perfins, registration labels), demonstrating a large variety of postal usages and auxiliary markings (balloon, catapult, censored, crash, disposed of, forwarding, free franking, money order, mourning, official, pneumatic tube, postage due, rocket, sea mail, special flights, wrappers, Zeppelin), supporting many classes of service (air mail, express, post card, printed matter, reply card).

Particularly important items are mounted on blue background.